

Message Text

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PAGE 01 TRIPOL 01200 221605Z

43

ACTION SS-25

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C O N F I D E N T I A L TRIPOLI 1200

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, ENRG

SUBJECT: OXY DISPUTE WITH LARG

REF: TRIPOLI 1193, 1186, AND 1172; STATE 249776 AND 245713;

LONDON 16091

1. IT SEEMS TO US A PROMISING ROUTE TOWARD SETTLEMENT NOW OF THE TRAVEL ISSUE IN OXY-LARG DISPUTE WOULD BE FOR A SENIOR DEPT OFFICIAL, PROBABLY ASSISTANT SECRETARY ATHERTON, TO SPEAK TO OXY PRESIDENT BAIRD (A) TO CLARIFY FOR HIM DEPT'S POSITION AND EMBASSY ACTIONS REGARDING LIBYAN TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND (B) TO URGE OXY TO REACH UNDERSTANDING SOONEST WITH PETROLEUM MINISTRY WHICH PROVIDED FOR LARG TO ABOLISH PERSON FOR PERSON PROCEDURE AND FOR OXY TO ASSURE, POSSIBLY FOR A STATED PERIOD, THAT INSTALLATIONS WOULD BE PROPERLY MANNED AND OPERATED.

2. CHARGE HAD LONG TALK WITH OXY LIBYA HEAD ESPEY TO TRY TO UNDERSTAND WHAT COMPANY'S HIGH COMMAND IN LOS ANGELES IS DRIVING AT IN ITS REPEATED EFFORTS TO GET OXY EMPLOYEES TO "FORMALLY PROTEST" TO U.S. AND U.K. EMBASSIES THAT LARG IS OBSTRUCTING THEIR EXIT AND IN ITS EMOTIONAL CRITICISMS THAT USG IS NOT DOING ENOUGH FOR COMPANY EMPLOYEES. IN ANSWER TO HIS QUESTION, ESPEY WAS ASSURED USG DEFINITELY IS NOT USING DISPUTE AS A MEANS

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TO FURTHER ANY LARGER POLITICAL OBJECTIVE USG MIGHT HAVE.

HE WAS ASKED IF COMPANY SEEMED TO THINK ITS OVERALL BARGAINING POSITION WOULD BE STRENGTHENED IF USG SOMEHOW BECAME DEEPLY INVOLVED IN TRAVEL ISSUE? NO, HE DID NOT BELIEVE THIS WAS THE OBJECT.

3. ESPEY SAID HIS IMPRESSION WAS THAT THE LOS ANGELES HIGH COMMAND, WHICH HAS NO REAL CONCEPTION OF CONDITIONS IN LIBYA, ACTUALLY THINKS DEPT IS UNWILLING TO SHOULDER ITS RESPONSIBILITIES FOR PROTECTION OF AMERICAN CITIZENS. THIS VIEW, HE SUGGESTED, MAY HAVE DEVELOPED AS RESULT OF DEPT SPOKESMAN'S OR OTHER OFFICIAL'S COMMENT EARLIER IN OCT THAT EMBASSY ONLY KNEW OF ONE OR TWO HARDSHIP CASES AMONG OXY AMERICANS.. ESPEY IS INCLINED TO THINK THAT WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO HEAR AND READ IS A STRONG USG PROTEST TO LARG ON THE TRAVEL ISSUE.

4. WE BELIEVE THAT BOTH PARTIES REALIZE THE RISKS OF THE TRAVEL RESTRICTIONS AND THAT WITH A LITTLE GOODWILL AND SENSE AND SOME PRESSURE LARG WOULD DROP THEM IF OXY WOULD PLEDGE TO SAFEGUARD NORMALLY LWHE OIL FIELB AND INSTALLATIONS. FIELD WORKERS AND OTHERS WOULD SETTLE DOWN IS SUCH ARRANGEMENT WERE MADE. WE DOUBT IF THERE WOULD BE MANY WOKERS WHO WOULD ELECT TO DEPART FOR GOOD, AND WE UNDERSTAND THAT

EMERGENCY REPLACEMENT WOULD NOT BE A GREAT PROBLEM.
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